

Department of Human Services

Articles in Today's Clips Thursday, July 26, 2007

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
(517) 373-7394



<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
*Foster Care	2-3
Child Abuse/Neglect /Protection	4-8
Juvenile Justice	9-10
Vulnerable Adults	11
Fatherhood	12-13
Local DHS Offices	14

*Important story at this spot



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **Lansing State Journal**. To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Published July 26, 2007

Mel Haga is executive director of the Michigan County Social Services Association.

Mel Haga: Web site is first of what should be many aids for 'ex-'foster kids

You have just celebrated your 18th birthday. Congratulations - you're now an adult! Oh, and by the way, you need to leave the home you've been living in and find another; you need to find a job and support yourself; you need to figure out how you're going to get the education you need for the employment you want; and you need to do it without the help of a parent or guardian.

What if you have health problems?

What if you have legal problems? What if you have a child of your own? What a challenge!

Yet this is the situation in which many foster care kids found themselves. There are some resources, but how do you find them?

The current foster care law stipulates that youth are no longer eligible for foster care when they reach the age of 18. At that point, they are technically "adults" and they are on their own. Their support system is suddenly gone.

In 2006, there were 536 youths, statewide who left the system solely because of their age.

Research shows that as they leave the foster care system, these youths are at greater risk for poverty, homelessness, unemployment and other negative outcomes.

They need information, advice and guidance to make good choices.

Thankfully, there is now a Web site that pulls together a wealth of information on these subjects and more. Finally there is help for those youths who "age out."

The Department of Human Services has launched this Web site specifically for such youth in foster care.

The site is a result of recommendations made by the Statewide Task Force on Youth Transitioning from Foster Care, which included input directly from foster kids.

Youth Boards, part of the Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative, have been formed to assist in maintaining the Web site, to keep the information updated and relevant, and to provide limited financial support to foster kids in transition.

The Web site is user-friendly and geared to provide not only factual information, but networking

possibilities and role models. (Did you know that NBA great Alonzo Mourning, legendary baseball great Babe Ruth, singer/actress Cher, actor/comedian Eddie Murphy, first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, Domino's Pizza mogul Tom Monaghan and The Beatles' John Lennon were foster children?).

Short of legislation to increase services, which the Michigan County Social Services Association has supported, the Web site is a giant step ahead to make available a wealth of information for young people transitioning to independent living. We would like to acknowledge the parties that collaborated to make this Web site possible and to encourage young people facing this transition to access the Web site.

Although the Web site was specifically designed to assist youth in transition from foster care, the information and access to it are available to any young person in need of such assistance.

Go to www.michigan.gov/fyit; use it and share it.

It just might make the difference between success and failure.

Copyright 2007 Lansing State Journal Use of this site signifies your agreement to the Terms of Service (updated August 2006)

[\[Back\]](#)



Father held in death of 3-year-old daughter

Thursday, July 26, 2007

By Danielle Quisenberry

dquisenberry@citpat.com -- 768-4929

A 25-year-old Jackson man could be charged today in connection with the death of his 3-year-old daughter, a child one neighbor remembered as "a little tiny tart, a beautiful thing."

A tiny pink folding chair, a little bike and some other toys sat on the house's side porch Wednesday. The girl's stepmother sat for awhile among the toys but declined to speak about what had happened at the house at 403 W. Biddle St.

Paul Brower was arrested Wednesday and is being held in the Jackson County Jail as police seek charges of open murder, Jackson Deputy Chief Matt Heins said.

County Assistant Prosecutor Allison Bates said Brower could be arraigned today. Police and prosecutors were awaiting preliminary results of an autopsy performed late Wednesday.

Heins said Brower found his daughter, Victoria, about 5 a.m. Wednesday face-down in her bed in the apartment she shared with him and her stepmother.

The deputy chief declined to detail events that led to the girl's death and her father's arrest.

"Apparently, the father was upset at the child (Tuesday) night. The father, according to what we believe, disciplined the child (Tuesday) night," Heins said.

He said statements made by Brower, a Jackson factory worker, and his wife, Trina Brower, plus evidence found at the scene and the advice of the prosecutor's office caused police to place the man in jail.

Bates said Wednesday afternoon no decision had been made on potential charges.

Neighbors said they heard the father screaming for help early Wednesday.

"He was running around, knocking on doors," said La'Shun Nelson, who lives a few houses away.

Brower was outside the house crying Wednesday morning, said Palena Parris, who lives across the street. "It's so sad."

Few others seemed to know the family well.

"The girl was a little tiny tart, a beautiful thing," Nelson said.

Demetrius Oakes, 17, who lives next door, said he baby-sat the girl.

"She was always good. I never had a problem with her," Oakes said.

She was an "innocent child," said Jawana Taylor, who also lives on the block. "It's terrible. ! She was a baby. She wasn't even in preschool yet."



5 infants die while sleeping unsafely

Baby needs own hazard-free crib, parents are warned

July 26, 2007

BY ZACHARY GORCHOW

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

A surge of deaths resulting from babies sleeping in their parents' beds or from unsafe objects in their cribs in Wayne County is prompting health officials to plead with parents to put their infants in a safe sleeping environment.

Five infants, ranging in age from 27 days to 3 months, died Monday and Tuesday from unsafe sleeping practices, Dr. Carl Schmidt, the Wayne County medical examiner, said Wednesday.

That brings the total this year to 30 -- compared with 50 for all of 2006 and 44 in 2005. About two-thirds of the deaths this year occurred in Detroit, but the number of such fatalities in the county's suburbs also increased.

Four of this week's deaths occurred in Detroit. The other was in Ecorse.

Sandra Frank, executive director of Tomorrow's Child, a statewide organization devoted to child protection, called the Wayne County situation "a very unique and disturbing and alarming experience" compared with stable numbers in the rest of the state, including Macomb and Oakland counties. Exact figures were not available Wednesday.

Frank said parents must take the risk seriously.

"Most people don't think that this is going to happen to them," she said.

Health care providers warn new parents and parents-to-be about the importance of cribs that meet safety standards and keeping objects like stuffed animals out of them, and of the dangers of putting the baby to sleep in the parents' bed.

But such warnings often conflict with family traditions -- and poverty, which can result in parents using a sofa cushion or the adult bed as the place where their baby sleeps, officials said.

"It can lead to tragedy," Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano said at a news conference Wednesday.

To help combat the poverty factor, the county offers 200 free portable cribs to parents identified by neonatal and maternity staff as needing them.

The parents have to take a safe sleep class and must be from a city in the county other than Detroit, which has its own health department and jurisdiction over health programs for its residents. The county is in charge of communities outside Detroit.

Loretta Davis, health officer at the county's Department of Public Health, said the county has alerted the city of the rise in deaths and would provide assistance to the city if requested.

Unsafe sleep situations that aren't fatal can still deprive babies of oxygen for an extended time, causing permanent neurological damage, said Dr. Jeffrey Devries, vice president for medical affairs at Children's Hospital of Michigan.

Contact **ZACHARY GORCHOW** at 313-223-4536 or zgorchow@freepress.com.

Copyright © 2007 Detroit Free Press Inc.

[Return to regular web page](#)



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **The Detroit News**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

July 26, 2007

Two days, five babies die in parents' beds

Darren A. Nichols and Joe Menard / The Detroit News

WAYNE -- Five babies were smothered to death this week while sleeping, including three who were in bed with their parents, prompting Wayne County on Wednesday to launch a campaign aimed at ending the practice of bed sharing.

County Executive Robert Ficano said that although the practice may have been passed on down generationally, it's still unsafe.

"We're trying to send out the message that we realize that this might be a family tradition or one that you feel is harmless in sleeping in with a child," Ficano said. "(But) for us, it's very obvious that this has led to the increase in the number of unfortunate deaths in Wayne County. It may be a very beloved tradition for some families to do, and (they might) not realize what they are exposing their child to."

Five children, ranging from 27 days to 3 months old, died on Monday and Tuesday. Four lived in Detroit, and one was in Ecorse, Wayne County Medical Examiner Carl Schmidt said.

All five cases remain under investigation.

"That's a lot in a short time, which means something needs to be done to get through to people that this actually could happen," Schmidt said. "If you have a crib, use it for your child. Don't use it for storage."

The county plans to give away 200 cribs as part of its effort to get parents to put their babies to sleep in cribs.

About half of all parents are sleeping at least part of the time in the same bed as their babies, said James McKenna, a biological anthropology professor at the University of Notre Dame who runs the university's Mother-Baby Behavioral Sleep Laboratory.

"There is nothing intrinsically dangerous about bed sharing," said McKenna, who wrote the book "Sleeping with Your Baby: A Parent's Guide to Cosleeping." "The problem is not everyone bed shares safely."

He rejects efforts to eradicate the practice, saying co-sleeping and bed sharing has several benefits, especially for breastfeeding mothers.

Co-sleeping allows mothers to quickly respond to the infant if it cries or chokes, or needs to be warmed or cooled. The physical closeness between mother and baby also helps regulate the infant's breathing, sleep state, arousal patterns, heart rate and body temperature, McKenna said. "It's quite expected and normal and healthy that mother and baby are sleeping on the same surface," he said, adding the decision of whether to co-sleep "belongs only to the mother and father."

"It's not a recommendation that everyone should bed-share," he said. "A one-size-fits-all strategy doesn't work for anything."

In Wayne County, the goal of Operation Safe Sleep is to save babies from premature death by educating people about unsafe sleeping positions and places. Other concerns are people who wrap babies too tightly or have them sleep with stuffed animals in the crib.

The overall infant mortality rate in the county is 11 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2005, officials said. The statewide rate for the same time period is 7.9.

But when broken down by race, three black babies die for every one white baby that dies before its first birthday, officials said.

Deaths of children caused by sleeping with their parents and being smothered have risen from 44 to 50 from 2005 to 2006, officials said. There have already been 30 deaths so far this year, but officials said if the trend isn't stemmed, the yearly total could reach 60.

The Wayne County Department of Public Health will work with area hospitals and community organizations to help spread the message through brochures printed in English, Spanish and Arabic. The brochure can be downloaded from the county's Web site

www.waynecounty.com. "We see a trend we want to get out in front of," said Loretta Davis, the county's director of public health. "This is a very important. We need to work toward reversing this trend."

You can reach Darren A. Nichols at (734) 462-2190.

Safe sleep tips

Wayne County is urging people not to share a bed with a baby, but some experts offer guidance if they do:

- Don't sleep with baby while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, which can make it harder to wake up if the baby is in danger.
- Don't put the baby on pillows or cover its head with a blanket. Also, keep stuffed animals off the bed.
- Make sure there are no gaps between the bed and the headboard where the baby can get stuck.
- Don't take your baby to bed if you smoke.
- Don't let infants share a bed with older children.

Source: James McKenna, biological anthropology professor at the University of Notre Dame

[Return to regular web page](#)

[Return to regular web page](#)



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **The Detroit News**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

July 26, 2007

Amber Alert issued for missing Clinton Township girl

Santiago Esparza / The Detroit News

CLINTON TOWNSHIP -- An Amber Alert has been issued this morning for a 16-year-old girl who did not come home Wednesday night.

Kayla Caterina Pelka was last seen by a friend about 8:30 p.m. Wednesday on foot on Kibbe Street in Mount Clemens, Clinton Township Police said.

She called her mother on a cellular telephone about 10 p.m. and was to return home by 11 p.m., police said, but she never came home.

Kayla, a township resident, has the mental capacity of a 9-year-old, her mother told police. Kayla's mother told officers her daughter is in extreme danger because of her mental condition, police said.

Kayla is about 4 feet, 9 inches tall. She weighs 100 pounds and has blue eyes and brown hair.

There is a scar over Kayla's right eye and she has pierced ears.

She last was wearing blue jeans, a powder blue tank top, black tennis shoes and a black choker-type necklace.

Anyone with information should call (586) 493-7902.

You can reach Santiago Esparza at (313) 222-2127 or sesparza@detnews.com.

[Return to regular web page](#)

ClickOnDetroit.com

Missing Clinton Township Teen Found

POSTED: 6:42 am EDT July 26, 2007

UPDATED: 10:15 am EDT July 26, 2007

CLINTON TWP, MICH. -- Police have canceled the Amber Alert for a missing 16 year old girl.

Kayla Pelka was last seen on Kibbie Street in Mt. Clemens Thursday night. The girl's mother says she was supposed to return home by 11 p.m., but never showed up.

Local 4's Art Edwards was working on the story when he drove by Kayla's friends house and spotted Kayla sitting on the porch.

She told Art her cell phone battery had died.

Kayla's mother said the girl is mentally challenged.

Police and family members are heading to the house to pick up Kayla.

Stay with Local 4 and ClickOnDetroit.com for more on this story,

RELATED TO STORY

[+ Enlarge](#)

Copyright 2007 by [ClickOnDetroit.com](#). All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.



Boy, 12, admits shooting dad

Father survived; sentencing is Aug. 28

July 26, 2007

BY STEVE NEAVLING

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

His palms together as if praying, the 12-year-old boy pleaded guilty Wednesday to shooting his father twice with a handgun.

The Eastpointe boy admitted in juvenile court in Mt. Clemens that he shot his father in the chest and arm on July 11 after an argument over discipline.

"I shot him," the shaky boy told the judge.

"This was a child who was given discipline that needs help, and he was rebelling against it," Macomb County Prosecutor Eric Smith said. "This kid needs some guidance."

His father, 52, dressed in a pink shirt and pinstripe suit, was silent after a judge ordered the boy to get psychological testing before his sentence as a juvenile on Aug. 28.

After the hearing, the boy's cousin, Rhonda Mitchell, said:

"He was a good kid. I want him to get help."

Smith said he would not charge the boy as an adult.

The boy, who is not being named because he is a juvenile, got the gun from a friend while they both walked out of Oakwood Middle School in Eastpointe about a week before the shooting, police said.

In a 911 call, the victim yelled, "I've been shot!"

When asked if the weapon was still in the home, the man repeated, "I've been shot in the chest!"

The father declined to comment as he walked out of the courthouse.

Smith didn't specify why the boy pulled the trigger, but did say there was no evidence of abuse.

Contact **STEVE NEAVLING** at 586-469-4935 or sneavling@freepress.com.

Copyright © 2007 Detroit Free Press Inc.

ClickOnDetroit.com

Boy Who Shot Father Pleads Guilty To Juvenile Charges

POSTED: 11:11 am EDT July 25, 2007
UPDATED: 8:47 pm EDT July 25, 2007

DETROIT -- A 12-year-old boy who shot his father pleaded guilty to juvenile charges Wednesday.

He could have been charged as an adult, but instead prosecutors entered a plea bargain and charged him with assault, felony firearms and concealing a stolen gun.

"We have two duties in cases like these--one is to protect society, and I think we did that today by securing his guilty plea, that mandates that he'll be put in state placement," said Eric Smith, Macomb County Prosecutor. "Two, we owe a duty to this child and that's to ensure he gets the guidance and security and counseling and treatment that he clearly needs."

The boy shot his father twice in the chest at their Eastpointe home July 11.

The boy told prosecutors he got the gun from a friend while walking home from school.

The boy was sent to live with his father because his grandmother was having trouble raising him, Local 4 reported.

The boy originally claimed that his father abused him, but he later confessed to prosecutors that he was just upset with his father's discipline.

The boy's father was hospitalized at the time, and has since been released. He attended the hearing, but refused to comment to the media.

A family representative said the boy's relatives are happy with the outcome of the case and they only want the boy to get the help he needs. They said he simply made a mistake.

The boy will be back in court next month for sentencing.

Stay with Local 4 News and ClickOnDetroit.com for updates.

Previous Story:

- July 12, 2007: [Court Hearing Postponed For Boy Accused Of Shooting Father](#)

Copyright 2007 by [ClickOnDetroit.com](#). All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

RELATED TO STORY



Video: Boy Pleads Guilty To Shooting Father

Careworker accused of sexual assault

By **Daniel Pepper**
Staff Writer

Wednesday, July 25, 2007 9:39 AM EDT

A Benton Harbor man has been accused of sexually assaulting a resident at the adult foster care facility where he worked.

Edgar Cortes Jimenez, 22, was arrested Thursday, July 19, after an investigation at the Cornerstone Adult Foster Care Residence in Cheshire Township by the Allegan County Sheriff Department and the Michigan Department of Human Services. Jimenez was arraigned Friday, July 20, in Allegan County District Court on charges of third-degree criminal sexual conduct and fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct against a vulnerable adult. He pleaded not guilty.

The sheriff department began investigating the charges Thursday, July 19.

According to the sheriff department, investigation continues into whether there might be more victims.

"Right now, it looks like a single victim," sheriff's Lt. Scott Matice said. "Some of the other residents at the home are very severely disabled to where they can't communicate, so it's hard to determine if any other assaults might have taken place."

Jimenez worked as a caretaker in the home, according to the sheriff department.

The sheriff department said the residence's management cooperated with the investigation.

Jimenez was lodged in the Allegan County Jail and bond is set at \$25,000.

Dan Pepper can be reached at dpepper@allegannews.com or at (269) 673-5534.



Edgar Cortes Jimenez



FATHERHOOD FIRST: Program helps men better lives, reconnect with kids

July 26, 2007

BY JACK KRESNAK

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Months of unemployment, thousands of dollars behind in child support, no car, no real home and separation from wife and son -- the kind of challenges that might push some men over the edge.

But 39-year-old Kevin Crawford of Detroit isn't letting any of those problems -- and he has them all -- stop his mission to be a real father to his 6-year-old son, M6n Dai Crawford.

"I had no father, and no father figure, but I'm going to be there for my son," Crawford said this month while waiting at his estranged wife's Southgate home to visit with their son.

It won't be easy. Crawford, a former volunteer Detroit police reserve officer who has held mostly security guard jobs, hasn't worked steadily for more than a year.

He is one of nearly 50 Detroit men -- all unemployed or underemployed dads -- trying to get their lives on track so they can be better fathers through a new federally funded program. The goal is to help struggling dads connect with their children while addressing issues such as finding them jobs.

Many of the dads -- though not Crawford -- have felony convictions or are longtime substance abusers. Others, such as Crawford, have spotty work histories and poor credit ratings that make things such as renting an apartment or paying child support nearly impossible.

It is those hardest-of-the-hard-luck cases that the Detroit Workforce Development Department is taking on with the help of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Family Assistance.

The Promoting Responsible Fatherhood Initiative is one of President George W. Bush's efforts to shore up families through marriage and parenting programs that help parents, especially men, overcome barriers to supporting their children financially and emotionally.

An estimated 47% of U.S. children live in homes without their fathers, according to the department.

"If you look at some of the statistics -- they're earth-shattering," said Tara Wall, a spokeswoman for the office in Washington, D.C.

"In 1960, fewer than 10 million children did not live with their fathers. Today, the number is nearly 25 million. A third of these children won't see their fathers at all during the course of the year."

Children who grow up without their fathers are far more likely to fail in school, engage in criminal activity and abuse alcohol and drugs, according to human services department and numerous studies.

In Detroit, about 60% of children live without their fathers, feeding high school dropout and crime rates, said Roger McPhail, director of Detroit's fatherhood initiative.

"The outcomes for these children are horrific," McPhail said. "Seventy percent of high school dropouts are father-absent children. It impacts teen pregnancy. Four out of five teen suicides happen to father-absent children. Almost 70% of children locked up in reform schools and boot camps are father-absent children."

"It just repeats itself time and time again."

There are several programs in Michigan -- with and without federal funding -- that work with fathers. But in 2006, another \$50 million nationwide was added for the fatherhood initiative grants. Last fall, programs in Detroit, Houghton, Lansing, Flint, Jackson, Greenville, Caro, Grand Rapids, Muskegon and Port Huron received some of those grants, which can be renewed annually if goals are met.

The initial \$500,000 for Detroit's fatherhood initiative was released in November and a staff of four -- three case manager/job developers and a service coordinator -- began taking clients in March. Their job is to help men who may have a criminal history, substance-abuse problem or who lack job skills.

"Our mission is to help fathers get work so they can better support themselves and particularly their children, and secondarily to reconnect fathers to the overall lives of their children," McPhail said.

Most of the men are thousands of dollars behind in child support and have trouble dealing with the Friend of the Court, which enforces court orders. Many have been locked up for failing to pay.

"I was current, but since I lost my job, I may be three, four thousand in the hole now," said 45-year-old Gary Wells, who also is in the fatherhood program. "I have no problem with paying ... but the last couple of months has been a real change since I lost my job."

Wells' case manager has helped him deal with the Friend of the Court, hone his résumé and work toward getting into a school or vocational program.

Three of Wells' four children are adults and on their own. His youngest, 13-year-old Deandre Boyd, lives most of the year with his mother in Florida and spends the summer with his father in Detroit.

Wells said he worked for 10 years at a group home supervising abused, neglected or delinquent boys. In December, the home was closed for financial reasons and Wells hasn't been able to find a steady job.

The fatherhood program is helping him with résumé writing and job-interview skills, but also has taught him and others about domestic violence and how to maintain a relationship with a woman. Communication is the key, Wells said.

Case manager David Williams said about 20 men in the program have gotten at least part-time jobs, but the biggest handicap for about two-thirds of participants is a criminal history. He refers to the former inmates as "returning citizens."

"A lot of returning citizens have sordid pasts, but they just want a second chance to be a productive citizen," Williams said. "We're just trying to help them get back on their feet and be productive citizens."

Crawford said he has learned a lot about improving his relationships with his son and estranged wife, Sherrie Crawford. The couple married in 1998 and separated three years ago.

Sherrie Crawford, 37, said she has noticed improvements in how her husband interacts with her and their son. "He's been spending more time with Món Dai than before," she said.

Asked what he liked about his dad, Món Dai, smiling broadly, said: "I like that he spends time with me. We play video games. We play soccer."

Sherrie Crawford said her oldest son, who is 14, has not seen his father for years because the man is in prison.

"It's affected him," she said of the teenager. "He carries it from school to school. He just doesn't have a full life. It's important for the dads to be around."

Contact **JACK KRESNAK** at 313-223-4544 or jkresnak@freepress.com.

Copyright © 2007 Detroit Free Press Inc.

Eagle Herald
Manette - Menominee

7/25/07

Menominee DHS office in jeopardy

10th Street site could fall victim to state's budget woes

By KURT STEIDL
 EagleHerald staff writer
 ksteidl@eagleherald.com

MENOMINEE — Time is running out on the Department of Human Services office in Menominee.

The office, located at 2612 10th St., could very well fall victim to the state's ongoing budget difficulties.

The state is taking steps to close the office and operate its programs and services through its Delta County facility, a move that has alarmed those who work in tandem with the Menominee DHS employees.

"The office averages 30 walk-ins for services and information each day," said Joy Johnson, the volunteer coordinator for CASA of Menominee County, which works with but is not part of DHS. "Many of the people seeking these services have no vehicles or available transportation to Escanaba. Some do not even have phones in order to call for information."

It is uncertain when the office is scheduled to close.

“

"How can the state justify this possible increased danger to vulnerable children?"

Joy Johnson

CASA volunteer coordinator

but Johnson said she has heard rumors of an October closure.

Johnson and Probate Judge William Hupy both are concerned about the many negative effects such a move would have, and Johnson said the closure raises troubling questions.

A child protective services worker is currently available around the clock in the county, she said, and response time would be seriously delayed under the state's plan to move the office to Escanaba.

See DHS, A5

FROM A1

DHS:

"There's a loss of immediacy," Hupy said. "One of the greatest dangers is that with them located 55 miles north, if there is a complaint here in Menominee on a Friday afternoon at 3:30 (p.m.), those workers won't get here until 4:30."

Another concern Hupy voiced is that a change would make it improbable that a DHS employee could meet a child at school and request action before a parent picks up the child.

"There's just a very small window of time here to get the child out of that situation," he said. "If they come here by 4:30, it's too late. That child is back with the parents."

"How can the state justify this possible increased danger to vulnerable children?" Johnson asked.

Those under supervision of any kind routinely check in monthly, Hupy said, and that will be another hardship that will occur.

"You've got to go part-way for some of these people," said Hupy, adding that people are more apt to report if they don't have to travel far.

DHS Regional Director Richard Miketinac has heard his employees' concerns and is trying to find an alternative site in the Menominee area for the office.

"When I go down to Menominee, I'm always checking to see if there are low-cost alternatives," he

said.

He has passed on many of the same concerns to his superiors.

"I am hoping that we will be successful in locating and obtaining a facility that will allow us to at least house enough staff to prevent the need for Menominee residents to travel to Escanaba for services and also enable us to quickly respond to child and adult protective services complaints in Menominee County," he said.

Miketinac, who remains hopeful he will be able to locate either a low-cost or no-cost building for the office, said it is becoming more unlikely he will be able to relocate the office and keep the staff in Menominee.

"My goal is to preserve our current level of service to our clients to the maximum extent possible and preserve as many staff positions as possible in Menominee while simultaneously expending as few tax dollars as possible," said Miketinac, who can be reached at 863-1421 or (906) 288-0777.

"He sees the benefits of keeping a local office. He doesn't need to be convinced," Hupy said.

Hupy, Johnson and others are urging local residents to contact local state legislators in an effort to save the Menominee location.

"It would be a a hardship for both our employees and clientele if they close that office," Miketinac said.